



Christmas 2023

Duelm Family Newsletter

A Sad Note

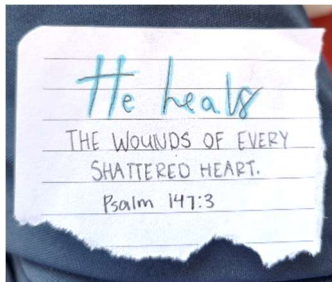
We hate to start on a sad note, but the most important story of 2023 is that Julie lost two siblings. Her brother Ted passed away in May and her oldest sister Suzie passed in September. Both were sudden, leaving the family in shock.



Ted and Suzie

Ted was a former NBA referee who retired to Puerto Rico but traveled frequently to Indiana to spend time with his three kids and grandkids. Suzie was a former dental hygienist who retired with her husband to Phoenix and was active in the lives of their three kids and six grandchildren.

Their loss has been painful, but we trust in God's promises. In fact, three days after Suzie passed, we were sitting outside the local ice cream parlor when a group of young girls walked up to our table. One gave Julie the handwritten slip of paper shown here and said, "I think you need this." The encounter was beyond logic or coincidence. We won't say it was Suzie or Ted incognito, but that wouldn't surprise us either.



Moving Forward

On a brighter note, we hope this Christmas finds you healthy, happy, and looking forward to the year ahead. We also hope you enjoy our family tradition of pictures and stories from the past twelve months.



Brock and Gina at Sequoia National Park

Frugality Doesn't Pay

We take at least one adventure trip each year with Brock and Gina. This year it was to Fresno, California, and its three national parks. Brian purchased a \$30 day pass for the first park, Sequoia, but the entrance sign offered an annual nationwide pass for only \$20 for citizens 62 and older. Brian looked at Julie and said, "hey, you're now older than 62!" That was a lesson learned. It's never a good thing to publicly leverage your wife's age to save a few bucks. (Brian was still excited to get the annual pass AND a \$10 refund.)

Antique Classic Rock

Tony and Katie celebrated a major milestone this year: their 10th wedding anniversary. We watched Nora while they took a trip to Las Vegas. They weren't there for the gambling or the shows, but rather for a music festival with 50 bands from the 1990s and early 2000s. The festival was called "When We Were Young," which explains why the Billy Joel concert we attended was called "Because You Are Ancient."



Tony, Nora, and Katie at the Art Car Parade

Colorful Commentary

We have been blessed to spend many weekends with Tony, Katie, and Nora, whose personality is a unique blend of intelligence, joy, and mischief. During a discussion about hair, Brian said with nostalgia “My hair is brown.” Nora exclaimed “NO PawPaw, your hair is GRAY!” Then she reached up under his chin, grabbed some loose skin, and squealed “squishy neck!” Kids may say the darndest things, but can we add body shaming to the preschool curriculum?

Measure Once, Cut Twice

This year we faced a major decision whether to remodel our home or wait another 40 years for “retro” style. We opted to remodel. The end result is beautiful, but the process was a lesson in “trust but verify.” Early on our contractor jack-hammered up the slab in order to relocate the drain for a new bathtub. Brian walked in after new concrete was poured, scratched his head, and pulled out a tape measure. The drain was 1½" off center, meaning the tub would not fit. You can imagine the discussion that ensued. Needless to say, the tub now fits, but don’t ask about the shower or cabinets.

Scrooged

We traveled to Illinois several times to spend time with Brian’s parents. During our last visit the four of us went to a casino. Arlin and Joyce had not been there since before the pandemic. Joyce found her favorite slot machine and played \$20. No luck. As she dug in her purse for another bill, Brian inserted a \$20 into her machine. Two spins later Joyce hit the motherload, a \$1,166 jackpot. Brian asked, “what’s my share?” Joyce smiled and replied, “I’ll give you your \$20 back.”



Celebrating Joyce’s 85th Birthday

The Rest of the Story

Brian turned 60 this year and continues to facilitate leadership programs for the US Oncology Network while Julie manages our social calendar. Tony handles accounting for the City of Bryan and Katie is managing editor for Texas A&M University Press. After five years

in their studio apartment in Baltimore, Brock and Gina moved into a spacious two-bedroom townhome in Ellicott City, a suburb. Brock continues surveying with S. J. Martenet and Gina expanded her marketing and communications role at Johns Hopkins University.



This welcome message got a few stares at the airport.

Contact Us At...

We’re still at 227 South Crimson Clover Circle in The Woodlands, Texas 77381. Our email address is jbduehm@gmail.com, and home phone number is 281-292-0791. Julie’s cell phone number is 713-306-2145. Brian’s cell number is 713-417-2852.



Easter with Nora

**Have a Merry
Christmas!**